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Prime Minister's schedule, October 11

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 12, 2007

07:44

Met with Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Ohno at the Kantei.

09:01

Lower House Budget Committee meeting.

12:06

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Returned to the Kantei.

13:00

Lower House Budget Committee meeting.

17:03

Met with next chairman of the Vietnam and Japan Parliamentary Friendship League. Chairman Takebe of the Japan-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship League was present. The met with Chuma, head of the LDP Administrative Reform Promotion Headquarters.

17:46

The 10th regular convention of the Japanese Trade Union Confederation held at the Tokyo International Forum in Marunouchi.

18:09

Returned to the Kantei.

18:44

Met with ambassadors to Japan from Islam nations at ANA Intercontinental Hotel in Tokyo. Chief Cabinet Secretary Machimura was present.

19:41

Returned to his private residence in Nozawa.

4) Fuel supplied to core ship in Iraq operations before war; DPJ to pursue fuel diversion; MOD asks US for info

ASAHI (Top play) (Abridged)
October 12, 2007

In late February 2003, shortly before the Iraq war, a Maritime Self-Defense Force supply ship refueled a US Aegis-equipped destroyer that can be loaded with cruise missiles, the Ministry of Defense revealed yesterday. In this regard, the ministry has inquired of the United States about whether the Aegis destroyer was loaded with Tomahawk missiles when refueled and about the destroyer's activities thereafter, officials said yesterday. The US destroyer participated in antiterror operations in the Indian Ocean. However, it is evident that the destroyer played a key role in the Iraq war as well and launched about 50 Tomahawk missiles. Meanwhile, in the Diet, the House of Representatives Budget Committee held a meeting of its directors yesterday. In the meeting, a committee director representing the leading opposition Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto) proposed invoking the right to conduct investigations in relation to government in conformity with the Constitution's Article 62, suspecting that fuel provided by the MSDF might have been used for Iraq operations.

Kazuhiro Haraguchi, a House of Representatives member from the DPJ, took up the matter when the Budget Committee of the lower chamber met yesterday. In the meeting, Haraguchi asked about the USS Paul

Hamilton, a US destroyer. He noted that the destroyer participated in Iraq attacks with Tomahawk missiles onboard. "This destroyer has tremendously strong fighting power and was a core ship in the Iraq war," Haraguchi stated before the committee. He then asked whether the destroyer used MSDF-supplied fuel for Iraq operations.

In his reply, Defense Minister Ishiba promised to release findings. "To tell the truth," Ishiba stated, "I'm also aware of this matter you've noted now." He also stated: "The question is whether it's a

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ship that can be loaded with Tomahawks. That's the point, I think. We're now looking into the facts, and I want to make it public as soon as we're ready."

The USS Paul Hamilton is equipped with Aegis systems including powerful radar, according to the US Navy's official website and other sources. Tomahawk missiles can be also mounted on the destroyer. The Paul Hamilton was out at sea for a period of about nine months from August 2002 through April 2003. The Aegis destroyer participated in Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), an antiterror operation in the Indian Ocean. In addition, the destroyer also participated in the Iraq war.

In those days, CNN reported that the USS Paul Hamilton had arrived in the Persian Gulf before the Iraq war and participated in sanctions against the then Hussein regime through maritime interdiction operations like cargo ship inspections. The Paul Hamilton fired a total of about 50 Tomahawk missiles during the Iraq war, the largest number of Tomahawk missiles fired by a single vessel.

Such suspicions being floated, the DPJ proposed invoking the right to investigate state affairs in a meeting yesterday of directors on the House of Representatives Budget Committee. The DPJ currently holds a majority of the seats in the House of Councillors. The ruling and opposition parties have now changed places in the Diet's upper chamber. This is the first time for the DPJ to propose invoking its investigative right in such a situation. The DPJ is now going through parliamentary investigative procedures, seeking to unveil facts about the activities of foreign naval vessels in the Indian Ocean over the past six years, including the USS Kitty Hawk, a US aircraft carrier that is suspected of having used MSDF-supplied fuel for Iraq operations, and the USS Paul Hamilton, as well as facts about the activities of multinational forces in Afghanistan.

5) 200,000 gallons provided directly to US destroyer

ASAHI (Page 1) (Full)
October 12, 2007

According to the Japanese and US governments, the Maritime Self-Defense Force supply vessel Tokiwa refueled the USS Pecos, a US oiler, with about 800,000 gallons in the Indian Ocean on Feb. 25, 2003, and after that provided about 200,000 gallons of fuel to the Paul Hamilton as well. On the same day, the USS Pecos, capable of tanking up to 7,560,000 gallons on board, refueled the USS Kitty Hawk, a US aircraft carrier, with about 675,000 gallons, and also refueled the USS Cowpens, a US cruiser, with about 149,000 gallons.

The Kitty Hawk began to support Iraq operations on the night of Feb. 28, 2003, three days after its arrival in the Persian Gulf. According to the Japanese and US governments, the Kitty Hawk, before her embarkation on Iraq operations, consumed fuel equivalent to the amount of fuel provided by Japan. In the Diet, however, the opposition bench pursued this matter, suspecting that the Kitty Hawk might have used MSDF-supplied fuel for Iraq operations. It is also evident from US military data that the Cowpens, after receiving fuel from the MSDF, was almost on the same track as the Kitty Hawk.

6) Government, ruling parties mulling inclusion of clause prohibiting refueling oilers into new legislation; Policy switch following suspected fuel diversion

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The government and the ruling camp yesterday started reconsidering the possibility of including a clause prohibiting refueling other countries' oilers, an act allowed under the existing Antiterrorism Special Measures Law, into new legislation aimed at enabling the Maritime Self-Defense Force to continue refueling operations in the Indian Ocean.

They considered mentioning such a ban in an exchange of notes with oil-recipient countries, instead of directly mentioning it in an article under the law. However, following the allegation that fuel supplied by an MSDF supply ship has been used for other than Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) purposes, the government has decided to seek understanding in the envisaged new legislation from the opposition camp, by including a ban to refuel oilers. It will adopt the new legislation at a special cabinet meeting on Oct. 17 and submit it to the Diet.

Regarding the issue of extending refueling operations for a US oiler, opposition parties at a Lower House Budget Committee meeting harshly pursued a case in which a US aircraft carrier, which was indirectly refueled by a US oiler that received fuel from an MSDF supply vessel in February 2003 right before the outbreak of the Iraq war, took part in the Iraq war, citing that the MSDF-supplied fuel was diverted for the use in the Iraq war.

As a result, calls for clarifying a policy of reviewing refueling activities for oilers, which has triggered the diversion allegation, flared up again in view of Diet deliberations on the new legislation. In a speech given at plenary session of a meeting of his faction, LDP Vice President Taku Yamasaki, who presides over the ruling party's project team, announced his parties plan, "We want to modify the outline of the new legislation and include a measure addressing questions raised by the opposition before submitting it to the Diet."

The new legislation would limit vessels eligible for receiving fuel to those engaged in the MIO, in which the MSDF is taking part. However, some government officials are calling for going no further than making such a limit a measure to be observed in actual operations with one noting, "This is not a matter to be stipulated in the bill."

7) DPJ to offer do-or-die resistance to new antiterrorism legislation; Calls for invoking administrative investigation rights

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) is ready to offer do-or-die resistance to the government's new legislation to continue the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. In a directors' meeting of the House of Representatives Budget Committee yesterday, the DPJ called for invoking its right to investigate state affairs, on the grounds that the government's replies to the DPJ's request for disclosing detailed information on the refueling operation are insufficient.

The DPJ has repeatedly called on the government to disclose related

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documents at the Lower House Budget Committee and the party's Policy Research Committee. The aim is to prove the alleged diversion of MSDF-supplied fuel for use in the Iraq war. If this charge is proved true, the propriety of the new legislation designed to eradicate terrorism in Afghanistan will be shaken.

In a Lower House Budget Committee meeting yesterday, Kazuhiro Haraguchi pointed out the possibility that an US Aegis destroyer provided with 200,000 gallons of oil by the MSDF in February 2003 might have carried Tomahawk cruise missiles. He then grilled the government over the allegation of diversion of MSDF-provided fuel

for use in the Iraq war. Defense Minister Shigeru Ishiba promised to give a reply after an investigation and also solicited an instruction from Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda to relevant government agencies to disclose information.

In the directors' meeting held afterward, the main opposition party urged the government to present related documents on the areas and the numbers of refueling, as well as the navigation plans of the refueled naval ships, including logbooks. The party then demanded invoking its administrative investigation rights. There is little possibility in the Lower House, where the ruling coalition has control, but head director Katsuya Okada stressed before reporters: "In the House of Councillors, in which the opposition bloc holds a majority, our right probably will be invoked."

(Political agenda)

Oct.15-17 Upper House Budget Committee meetings
17 Cabinet decision on a new bill to continue MSDF refueling mission in the Indian Ocean.
18 Targeted start of deliberations in the ruling coalition on the new antiterrorism bill.
Nov. 1 Expiration of the current Antiterrorism Special Measures Law
10 End of the extraordinary Diet session
21 An East Asia summit meeting (in Singapore)
Mid-Nov. US Visit by the prime minister
Mid-Dec. Decision by the ruling parties on an outline for tax system reform for next fiscal year.
Late Dec. Government's decision on a budget bill for the next fiscal year at a cabinet meeting

8) New refueling legislation to be submitted to Diet on Oct. 17, aiming at enacting it in second vote

NIKKEI (Page 1) (Slightly abridged)
October 12, 2007

The ruling coalition is quaking over the handling of new legislation enabling the Maritime Self-Defense Force (MSDF) to continue its refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, the top priority issue in the ongoing extraordinary Diet session. There appears a cautious view, centering on the New Komeito, the junior coalition partner of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), toward a hard-line approach that if the legislation is voted down in the House of Councillors, the ruling camp will take a vote again in the House of Representatives and get it pass through the Diet with its two-thirds strength in the Lower House. The LDP also wants to avoid a situation under which Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda will be forced to dissolve the Lower House to call a general election due to a possible political uproar triggered by taking two votes on the legislation. The ruling bloc is now being forced to make a tough decision on

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whether to continue deliberations on the bill in the Lower House or whether to send it to the Upper House in order to challenge the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ or Minshuto), the largest opposition party.

Forges idea of extending extra session to next year

Last night Minister Fukuda expressed his willingness to continue the MSDF refueling operation in the Indian Ocean, telling reporters: "I want to continue that operation in the Indian Ocean." The government will get a cabinet approval of the new refueling bill and submit it to the Diet on Oct. 17.

The ruling coalition initially aimed to pass the bill through the Lower House in early November. Although an extension of the current Diet session, which will run until Nov. 10, is unavoidable, the ruling camp will likely forego extending the session up to late January next year due to a growing cautious view about taking vote twice in the Lower House. Therefore, the session will likely extend until mid-December at the longest.

60 PERCENT public approval needed

A senior New Komeito member commented: "I think that we will be able to take a vote on the new legislation twice if at least 60 PERCENT of the public support it." The senior member predicted that an early dissolution of the Lower House will be a disadvantage for the ruling coalition.

In reaction to the ruling coalition's move to take a vote twice, in case the opposition camp submits to the Upper House a censure motion against the prime minister and the chamber passes it, deliberations will be stalled. And chances are that the opposition will strengthen its stance of confronting the ruling bloc, prompting the possibility of a Lower House dissolution. If the New Komeito does not join with the LDP, it will be impossible to vote again in the Lower House. The LDP, therefore, cannot ignore the New Komeito's view.

Explanations to other countries indispensable

How Japan should contribute to the international community is another issue. The United Nations Security Council adopted in September a resolution expressing "appreciation" for activities against terrorism and preventing arms transfer. The UNSC expressed expectations of the continued refueling mission in the Indian Ocean. If the ruling coalition gives up on taking twice a vote in the Lower House, it will be difficult to enact new legislation based on the UN resolution. Since Fukuda has repeatedly stressed the importance of international contributions, he will have to explain to the international community. He is expected to visit the United States in mid-November. He will then explain Japan's situation regarding the new legislation to President George W. Bush and seek his understanding.

9) Fukuda determined to visit US in November after enacting new refueling legislation

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
October 12, 2007

Yasuo Fukuda has picked the United States as the destination of his first overseas trip as prime minister. He is planning visiting the

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country during a delicate period -- in mid- or late November -- when the Maritime Self-Defense Force's refueling mission in the Indian Ocean will have to be halted. The decision seems to reflect his strong resolve to enact new legislation in order to continue the MSDF mission.

Fukuda's US visit planned for November is drawing attention for two factors. One is how the question of refueling will be handled in his talks with President George W. Bush.

Through a post-inaugural telephone conversation with President Bush, Fukuda has been in accord with the US president to visit the United States early.

But once the Antiterrorism Law now in force expires on Nov. 1, the MSDF's refueling operation will inevitably be suspended. For this reason, there was concern early on that if the planned US trip was set for shortly after Nov. 1, the prime minister would find it difficult to visit the country just to explain the failure to continue the refueling operation.

Despite that, the prime minister has begun making preparations for the US visit. This can be taken that the scenario of extending the current session of the Diet until Nov. 10 to get the new refueling legislation to clear the House of Representatives by using a two-thirds majority rule once it is rejected in the House of Councillors has become a real possibility.

Asked last night by a reporter about his resolve for enacting the new legislation during the current Diet session, Fukuda said: "I want to pave the way for continuing the maritime operation in the Indian Ocean at all costs."

The US visit is also intended to dispel the concern that Japan's foreign policy might extremely tilt toward China.

Former Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who was regarded as pro-American, opted to visit China and South Korea shortly after assuming office, postponing his visit to the United States for six months. Although Fukuda is seen as pro-China, his visit to China is unlikely to occur until early next year. Their first official foreign trips clearly tell a difference in their diplomatic stances.

10) Fukuda to visit US first out of concern for possible suspension of refueling mission, emphasizes importance of Japan-US relations as cornerstone of Japanese foreign policy

ASAHI (Page 4) (Excerpts)
October 12, 2007

Nanae Kurashige

Prime Minister Fukuda has made up his mind to make the United States his first overseas destination after coming to power. Coordination has begun between the governments of Japan and the US to realize the visit in November. The purpose of the visit is apparently to emphasize Japan's continued stance of backing the war on terrorism despite an unavoidable suspension of the Maritime Self-Defense Force's (MSDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean, in which the MSDF has refueled US and other countries' vessels. Fukuda, who tends to be portrayed as a pro-China politician, appears to be motivated by his desire to produce an impression of prioritizing relations

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with the US as the cornerstone of Japan's foreign policy on the domestic and international audiences.

"Japan-US relations are the core of Japanese diplomacy. I think it is necessary to further cement relations with the US in order also to advance our diplomacy in Asia. After visiting the US, I want to travel to Asian nations," Fukuda told reporters at the Prime Minister's Official Residence late yesterday, making clear his intention to set his diplomatic calendar in a way to visit first the US and then Asia.

Fukuda has emphasized the importance of diplomacy toward Asia and clearly denied the possibility of visiting Yasukuni Shrine out of consideration for China since taking office as prime minister. Partly for these circumstances, China was suggested at one point by some in the government as the first country for Fukuda to visit as prime minister. In fact, in a telephone conversation with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao held immediately after assuming power as prime minister, Fukuda agreed with Wen to visit China as swiftly as possible.

However, it has become hopeless to enact by Nov. 1 a new law enabling the MSDF to continue its refueling mission because the opposition parties, which now control the Upper House, including the major opposition Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), remain opposed to enacting a new law. Concerned about the impact of a possible suspension of the refueling mission, many in the government had been insisting that the prime minister should prioritize his visit to the US.

Fukuda has good relations with US officials, including former Ambassador to Japan Howard Baker. In fact, when he visited Washington in May 2006 after stepping down as chief cabinet secretary, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice despite her tight

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schedule spared time to meet with Fukuda. Thus Fukuda has a broad personal network with the US. But because Fukuda has given a strong impression of being a pro-China politician, if he failed to visit the US first, "he could send a wrong message that he has prioritized Asia over the US," a government official noted.

Fukuda eventually decided to prioritize his visit to the US. As for his visit to China, coordination is underway to realize it possibly in next January. Former Deputy Foreign Minister Hitoshi Tanaka, who was regarded as one of the key advisors for Fukuda when he served as chief cabinet secretary, speculated on Fukuda's real intentions:

"The fundamental premise of Japanese diplomacy is that Japan-US relations are of vital importance. Based on that, Mr. Fukuda is considering 'Japan in Asia'."

11) Defense Ministry to again hold seminar to make the public understand the refueling mission

ASAHI (Page 4) (Full)
October 12, 2007

The Ministry of Defense (MOD) plans to hold a seminar on defense issues in 14 cities across the country starting on Oct. 17. The aim is to disseminate among the public the importance of the Self-Defense Forces' (SDF) refueling mission in the Indian Ocean under the Antiterrorism Special Measures Law. This seminar will follow the one held in September. The seminar will have a question-and-answer session and in the seminar, SDF personnel will

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explain their experiences. The planned locations of the seminar are as follows: Kumamoto (Oct. 17), Nagoya (Oct. 23), Kobe (Oct. 24), Niigata (Oct. 26), Kagoshima (Oct. 29), Obihiro in Hokkaido (Oct. 30), Aomori (Oct. 30), Yokosuka in Kanagawa (Oct. 31), Yonago in Tottori (Oct. 31), Asahikawa in Hokkaido (Nov. 1); Chiba (Nov. 5), Fukushima (Nov. 6), Takamatsu (Nov. 6), and Hamamatsu (Nov. 9).

Details are shown on MOD's website:
<http://www.mod.go.jp/j/news/2007/10/05b.html>,

12) Disharmony appearing in opposition camp over Ozawa's idea of participation in ISAF in Afghanistan

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 12, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa's idea of having the Self-Defense Force (SDF) join the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan has caused cracks to appear within the opposition camp. Some think that the proposed participation is unconstitutional because operations by the ISAF could entail the use of armed force.

Ozawa's idea is based on the view that since operations under a United Nations resolution are beyond the self-defense right that requires the mobilization of state power, they do not violate Article 9 of the Constitution even if they involve the use of force. Ozawa's opposition to the Maritime Self-Defense Force's continued refueling mission stems from the lack of endorsement by a UN resolution.

In the main opposition party, some members who came from the former Japan Socialist Party and mid-ranking or junior lawmakers have strong antipathy to SDF using force overseas. In a meeting yesterday of its senior House of Councillors members, one participant said: "(The Ozawa proposal) might lead to changing the political situation. Politicians tend to make a mistake in their strong areas."

Senior DPJ members are frantically trying to relieve the anxiety. In reference to Ozawa's earlier remark: "Those who do not agree with my idea should leave the party," Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka said in a press conference yesterday: "He did not necessarily mean that those who do not support his idea cannot stay in the party. He just expressed a general view."

When all opposition parties are aiming to form a strong united front, with an eye to the next House of Representatives election, some in the opposition bloc have also negatively reacted to the ISAF-participation idea.

Japanese Communist Party Chairman Kazuo Shii said in a press conference: "Our party will cooperate in opposing the government's new antiterrorism legislation," but he stressed regarding the proposed participation in the ISAF: "The Constitution bans the use of armed force overseas regardless whether there is a UN resolution or not. The participation would be a violation of the Constitution."

In a general meeting of Rengo (Japanese Trade Union Confederation), Social Democratic Party President Mizuho Fukushima also stated in her speech after Ozawa left the session: "Japan's participation in the ISAF apparently infringes on the Constitution. We cannot approve it."

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13) DPJ in uproar due to Ozawa's reference to ISAF participation as "party policy," drawing fire from constitutional protectionists and conservatives

TOKYO SHIMBUN (Page 2) (Abridged slightly)
October 12, 2007

Democratic Party of Japan (Minshuto or DPJ) President Ichiro Ozawa's statement terming participation in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan as "party policy" has created a stir in the party. The party leadership is trying to play down the significance in reaction to strong protests from conservatives and constitutional protectionists in the party as too forcible.

Touching on ISAF participation, Ozawa declared on Oct. 10: "We have promised it to the people as the party's basic view. Anyone who doesn't like it should leave the party." Deputy President Katsuya Okada, meeting the press in the Diet building yesterday, said in a delicate tone: "What the president said is extremely weighty. I think we will have to discuss what to do with the ISAF question in the party, while respecting the president's wishes."

A constitutional protectionist indicated that Ozawa should not have mentioned it at this point in time. A conservative member quipped: "It was as though they were words from God. The 'Ozawa disease' has come back."

To begin with, many DPJ lawmakers were reluctant about ISAF participation. There was also a mood in the party to put up with a call for ISAF participation as long as it was Ozawa's personal view. Ozawa's abrupt reference to ISAF participation as "party policy" has thrown the party into turmoil.

Sensing the party's atmosphere, Diet Affairs Committee Chairman Kenji Yamaoka told a press conference: "President Ozawa just mentioned a general argument. It means the ISAF is in line with the party view (proclaiming active participation in UN operations)."

Deputy President Azuma Koshiishi also explained: "The policy mentioned by President Ozawa is fine, but if there is a need for discussion, we will conduct discussions."

To counter a government-sponsored new refueling bill, discussion is underway in the largest opposition party to come up with a counterproposal including participation in the ISAF nonmilitary sector. But there is no guarantee that this will become a settlement line. The turmoil is likely to continue.

14) In 1974, radioactivity polluted water once nuclear-powered US warship entered port - the cause unknown, but Japanese government under US pressure changed its Diet reply on the matter (Akahata)

AKAHATA (Page 2) (Full)
October 12, 2007

Revealed by US document

A declassified US government document that has been acquired by international affairs researcher Akiharu Niibaru revealed that the US government put pressure on Japan when an Okinawa Prefecture port frequently entered by a US nuclear-powered warship was found to be

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polluted by radioactivity to change its reply in the Diet to "there was no pollution." The incident raises questions not only about the US government's invasion of Japan's sovereign right but also about

the Japanese government's caving in to US pressure so simply.

The incident happened on Feb. 25, 1974, in the Upper House Budget Committee where (then) Japanese Communist Party lawmaker Susumu Kato raised the question. Kato was pursuing the issue of the discovery of a high level of cobalt 60, a type of radioactive substance, found in the mud of the port of Naha and of White Beach in Okinawa Prefecture. The then deputy director of the Nuclear Energy Bureau of the Science and Technology Agency, Yoshitoku Ihara, replied: "We can surmise that a certain portion (of the cobalt 60) may have come from a nuclear-powered submarine." He acknowledged that the radioactive pollution was caused by the US forces.

However, three days later, on Feb. 28, Ihara changed his reply when queried by another lawmaker to say: "(The cause of the unusual level of cobalt 60) must be concluded as completely unknown."

The whole story behind the changed Diet reply has now come out with the discovery by Niibara of the diplomatic telegram addressed to the US Department of State (dated Feb. 27, 1974) titled, "Assertion of radioactive pollution from nuclear sub." According to the document, the next day after the question by Kato in the Diet, the US Embassy's counselor responsible for political and military affairs told the director of the security affairs division in the Foreign Ministry that he was "horrified" by Ihara's reply, and he demanded that "no more such statements be made in the Diet." A ministry official then met immediately with Ihara who convinced him that the statement made in the Diet was a mistake.

In addition, the US embassy counselor provided a detailed instruction on how to explain this issue, saying, "The presentation should include that Cobalt 60 also exists in natural world (the initial announcement having stated 'unusual level'). The report noted that the Foreign Ministry official indicated his understanding.

However, cobalt 60 does not exist in the natural world, for in another State telegram dated March 6, addressed to the US Embassy in Japan, it was stated: "Cobalt 60 does not exist in the natural world." This incident indicates that the Foreign Ministry was willing to accept without criticism the instructions of the US even though scientifically incorrect.

15) Japan considering providing humanitarian aid to DPRK on condition of reinvestigation into Japanese abductees

SANKEI (Page 1) (Full)
October 12, 2007

The government yesterday began discussion to provide humanitarian aid to the flood-hit North Korea if that country responds to Japan's call for a reinvestigation into Japanese abductees. Japan intends to use humanitarian aid as a bargaining chip for dialogue with North Korea as its leader Kim Jong Il has indicated during the recent inter-Korea summit that he is positive about holding talks with the Fukuda administration. Tokyo intends to suggest holding a working group meeting on diplomatic normalization between Japan and the North under the six-party talks as quickly as possible.

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At the end of August, when the North suffered damage by flood, the former Abe administration considered offering humanitarian aid to the North, but it later gave up on doing so because there was no progress on the abduction issue at the Japan-DPRK working group held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, in early September.

Later, the Fukuda cabinet, which has emphasized the importance of dialogue with North Korea, came into being. In the recent two Koreas summit meeting, North Korean leader Kim noted: "I will wait and see how Japan's policy will change now that Mr. Yasuo Fukuda became prime minister." Expectations are building in the Japanese government with one Foreign Ministry official saying, "There seems to be a subtle change in North Korea's stance compared to its previous attitude that the abduction issue has been already settled."

Tokyo continues the sanctions measures now imposed independently on the North in protest against its nuclear test, but on the other hand, it wants to elicit concessions from the North on the abduction issue by providing humanitarian aid to the North as an emergency measure.

16) Kim Jong Il: No mention of "Japanese abductees"

YOMIURI (Page 2) (Full)
October 12, 2007

Shinichi Hirano, Seoul

South Korean Unification Minister Lee Tae Joung yesterday said that during the inter-Korean summit meeting held in Pyongyang on Oct. 3, the issue of normalizing diplomatic ties between Japan and North Korea was put on agenda, but that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il did not make any specific mention of the Japanese abductees, noting, "There was no concrete mention (of the abduction issue)." Lee revealed this at a panel discussion with senior members of the South Korean press companies. A professor at Yonsei University who accompanied South Korean President Roh Moo Hyun's visit to Pyongyang noted on Oct. 8 that North Korean leader Kim Jong Il had said, "There are no more Japanese abductees." Unification Minister Lee attended every part of the summit meeting.

According to Lee, Roh stressed in the summit: "It is absolutely important to normalize relations between Japan and North Korea for the sake of the peace of the Korean Peninsula as well as Northeast Asia. To this end, it is essential to improve without fail relations between Japan and North Korea." In response, Kim revealed his intention to wait and see what is the Fukuda administration's policy and attitude, but there was no specific mention of the abduction issue.

17) Gap remains at Japan-China gas field talks, casting pall over agreement before deadline

NIKKEI (Page 2) (Full)
October 12, 2007

The governments of Japan and China yesterday held bureau director-level talks in Beijing to discuss the development of gas fields in the East China Sea. However, the two sides remained at odds over areas for joint development. They just confirmed that they would meet again in Tokyo as soon as possible in November. Emerging

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from the meeting, Natural Resources and Energy Agency Director General Harufumi Mochizuki indicated his perception, "The path for promoting joint development is very severe."

Tokyo and Beijing during the April summit agreed to report on concrete measures to settle the joint development issue to their respective leaders this fall. However, reaching common ground before the deadline now appears difficult. The Japanese side wants to see areas covering Shirakaba (Chunxiao in Chinese) near the Japan-China median line, which it claims the line of demarcation drawn to separate the exclusive economic zones claimed by Tokyo and Beijing, chosen for joint development. However, China appears to have continued its stance of rejecting Japan's proposal.

"I expect China to make a political decision," says Foreign Minister Komura

Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura yesterday evening met with China's next Ambassador to Japan Cui Tiankai. Regarding the issue of developing gas fields in the East China Sea, over which the views of Japan and China are at odds, Komura asked China to make concessions, noting, "I hope that China will make a political decision for the building of a mutually beneficial strategic relationship." Cui replied, "We want to move forward for joint development so that the issue will not become an obstacle to the development of bilateral relations." He also asked Komura to visit China at an early date.

